The IDLER

Public Occurrences, Comment, Excursions & Rational Entertainment

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Where Are the Gutbucket Liberals?

THE SKIRMISH ON POVERTY

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Other Current Matters

THE LIBERALS ARE in sad shape these days. They've been flattered, hoodwinked, cajoled and bribed into believing that the Administration's Great Society program is the penultimate word in progressive government and that, when the time is right, Lyndon Johnson will come up with the ultimate word as well.

They will, after a few bourbons, complain that Mr. Johnson has outdone them. He has stolen their ideas, pumped their political well dry and used up the water in the priming pail to boot.

Ask a liberal where his cause is headed and he is likely to shrug his shoulders and mumble something about improving the quality of our nation, pursuing excellence, and implementing the goals of the Great Society.

The liberals' acquiescence to the Perdenales Pharaoh is not surprising. They've been easily bought off in the past. After the New Deal ran out of steam the liberals learned to be content with any scrap of legislation that bore even a remote resemblence to their lofty platitudes. That this attitude has hardened the liberal brain was aptly demonstrated by the medicare and anti-poverty legislation debates in Congress this year. The liberals stumbled all over each other in their rush to pay homage to sloppily designed and inadequate measures. More recently, the liberals displayed their pitiful degeneration as they betrayed thousands of Mississippi Negroes by their failure to push forcefully for the unseating of the all-white Mississippi congressional delegation, an action fully justified by law and demanded by conscience.

Perhaps the saddest of the lot is the professional Washington liberal. He is the most vocal in his claim of liberalism and quickest to accede to the whims of the illiberal. The professional Washington liberal attends White House conferences on this and that, writes articles for the press, testifies before congressional committees, and feels proud when he can help tack on fifty million dollars to a piece of constructive-sounding legislation. Yet give him a legislative placebo to salve his conscience and he will beat his reactionary compatriot to the Chevy Chase Club by a half hour every time. Though his language is rife with intellectual cliches and jargon, he and his brothers throughout the land pride themselves on their intellectual command of the complexities of our society. No mere men of action are they, no scummy populists or red-faced, rasp-voiced demogogues of the rabble, but deep-dish thinkers tackling the intricate philosophical and sociological problems of America.

Yet, on those uncomfortable occasions when the liberals are dragged down to reality, they suddenly forget their ideological commitments and rush to support third-rate programs in the interest of — as they say — "getting the camel's nose under the tent."

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The Idler

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Then, when the wrong camel's nose gets under the wrong tent, they return to their seminars to wonder amongst themselves what it is that is wrong with society.

Among the things that are wrong with society are that the liberals have accepted the limited goals of a national front government; they suffer from the torpor of excessive intellectualism; and they seem congenitally unwilling to come out swinging for programs our country obviously requires.

What we need is more gutbucket liberalism; more down-to-earth struggles in the tradition of the best of the early Progressive movements; more liberal politicians willing to say "I'd rather be right than regular;" and more men unembarrassedly fighting in the interests of the little people of America.

If the liberals who bemoan President Johnson's supposed kidnapping of the liberal movement would take but a quick look, they would discover that the Great Society is in no small part illusion. Unless the Administration considerably enlarges its goals, a good deal of the country can hardly look forward to even an adequate society in this decade or the next.

We are supposed to be living in a period of consensus. For the poorest one-fifth of the nation this is a hoax. For much of the rest of the country it is at least a partial misrepresentation. It is the task of the liberal to dissent heartily from the consensus before we lose the nascent concern of the past few years.

Mr. Johnson may feel it is unfair that since he has created much of the concern himself it should be turned against him. But this would not be the first time a revolution has outpaced its leaders. He'll just have to run a little faster.

Just where does the gutbucket liberal leave the consensus? Here are a few suggestions, all matters in which the Johnson Administration has not shown enough interest:

1. Tax Reform. No country can have a just society or expect to solve its problems if it does not have a just and rational tax system. Our system, with its innumerable loopholes, allowances, writeoffs and other forms of financial tomfoolery, has failed to meet this standard. The less affluent taxpayer struggles along with a meagre deduction for his wife and each kid and must rigidly account for every dollar paid for medicine or contributed to his church in order to lessen his tax burden. The wealthy taxpayer and the corporation, on the other hand, are presented with a plethora of opportunities to lower their effective tax rates and are able, through the services of high-priced accountants and tax lawyers, to take full advantage of them.

The income tax should be made truly progressive, allowances such as

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those for capital gains, and oil depletion should be greatly reduced or eliminated entirely, and our tax laws should be stripped of other loopholes. Serious consideration should be given to some form of negative taxation for the lowest income brackets.

2. Budget Reform. Our present national budget is the result of years of political compromise. We have found it convenient to dole out money to interest groups rather than apportion our expenses on the basis of real need. Thus we aid most farmers, not just those who require government assistance; we financially bless most veterans, not just those who need it; we will support the medical expenses of most old people, not just those who cannot afford to pay their own. This has created baroque inefficiencies in government spending, vast bureaucracies, and a loss of purposeful direction in government programs.

Of late, the stratospheric expenses of the space program have been latched onto the federal budget. The costs are sure to grow with the imagination of scientists and politicians, costs that are accepted with remarkably little debate by Congress and the public.

The space program is not the only unexamined federal expense. As Lyndon Johnson found out when he tried to close some Veterans' Administration hospitals, federal veterans' expenditures are also in the realm of the untouchable. Together, the space and veterans' programs take more than $10 billion from the national budget. Project Apollo, the manned moon flight, consumes $3 billion of the 1965 budget, perhaps seven or more times as much before we actually send three Americans to the moon.

If space adventures and veterans' benefits take ten percent of our national budget at a time when many of our citizens are living in misery, clearly our sense of proportion is badly out of whack. A major change in priorities is needed.

Even without such changes, however, there appears to be room for considerable expansion in the federal budget. With this year's $40 billion increase in gross national product, and

Liberals Discussing the Ills of Society

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last year's increase of $29 billion in disposable personal income. $6 billion in federal tax revenues, $6 billion in corporate profits, $6 billion in gross private savings, and $4 billion in automobile expenditures, our economy hardly seems incapable of providing the money to solve our problems.

Economist Leon Keyserling, for example, believes that the country could support a $135 billion federal budget by 1970 and a $156 billion one by 1975. Whether or not his estimates are correct, a major increase in federal budget will have to occur if the attack on poverty and other current ills is to be truly effective.

3. *Social Action Programs.* The government should commit itself to insuring that no one in the country suffers from inadequate food, housing, medical care, or education. This commitment should be fulfilled as soon as is humanly possible, not ten years from now or in two generations.

Whatever long-range hope the anti-poverty programs may hold, it can not be expected to reach this goal over the short run. The programs available to accomplish this task are numerous and include:

—Large scale public works programs designed to provide employment for the jobless.

—Federal incentives to state and local governments to begin projects to provide similar employment.

—An increase in the minimum wage and extension of its coverage.

—Major reduction in the mental and physical requirements for voluntary entrance into the military and the establishment of special commands for the education, training and physical rehabilitation of the unskilled, uneducated and unhealthy.

—Greatly increased federal contributions to the construction of new housing, schools and hospitals.

—Greatly increased federal contributions to the training of persons for public service in the educational and medical fields. (Educational grants could be made conditional upon the student's agreement to devote a certain amount of time working in public service. A potential teacher, for example, might agree to spend the first two years upon graduating teaching in a rural school in the South. A medical student might agree to spend one day a week for five years working at a public health clinic in the city in which he has his practice.) Still another way for the government to encourage more persons to fill needed public service jobs would be to determine that such jobs, if held for a specified period, would be accepted in lieu of military service.

—Full medical care financed from general revenues for all those unable to afford proper health service.

—Federal support of birth control clinics throughout the country, free distribution of birth control devices to the impoverished, and an extensive program of birth control education.

—Increased federal incentives to businesses to locate in areas of low employment and to individuals to move to areas of high employment.

—Extension of the TVA concept to other areas of the country.

—Greatly increased use of the food stamp program and the development of programs that will improve the dietary content of the food consumed in depressed areas.

—Conversion of farm programs from price-stabilizing to income-stabilizing. The farmer is the neglected man in the current poverty ruckus. Declining farm opportunities have not only intensified rural poverty but have caused a migration to large cities and thus magnified urban problems as well. Existing programs for rural housing loans need to be more vigorously pushed. Also needed are programs to increase the economic self-sufficiency of farmers.

It is true that the Administration has made moves in the direction of some of the programs mentioned. But the fear of those old bogiemen—"creeping socialism" and "welfare statism"—combined with the normal

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HUGH HAYNIE ...

"Next They'll Tell Us That HE Isn't The Father Of Our Country"

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reluctance of the established to disturb established conditions have caused its efforts to be, at best, timid.

In an attempt over the years to avoid the rage of reactionaries while at the same time keeping the liberals happy we have created an appalling conglomeration of confused, misused and unused programs.

We now have a situation in which all pressure groups — farmers, labor unions, the urban centers — have grabbed a piece of the cake. But the man at the bottom af each pressure group — the poor farmer, the unemployed laborer, the slum dweller—has hardly been allowed a bite. Thus we have created the super-structure of a welfare state without providing its supposed benefits to the people who need it most.

If we continue to legislate on the basis of appeasing powerful interest groups (the interests of whose members are not nearly as homogenous as the organizations claim) then surely we will create what we fear: a massive, irrational federal giant. If, on the other hand, we direct our money and our efforts on the basis of real need, we can avoid both the drab prospect of overextended federal control and the conconscionable continued neglect of serious problems.

We do not have to fear a federal government whose agencies are engaged in purposeful endeavors to improve the nation and the lot of those who live in it. But we should worry about a federal government that grows primarily to satisfy the accumulated greed of interest groups that have lost, in the enjoyment of their own power, the memory of their reason for growth.

There is an old spiritual that Ethel Waters used to sing which goes, in part:

"His eye is on that little sparrow,
"And I know He watches over me."

Much of our problem stems from the fact that we have lost sight of the sparrow. We have a massive pile of programs to watch over the interests of the AFL-CIO, the NAM, General Dynamics Corporation, the American Legion, Everett Dirksen, and every other well-established organization and individual. We have neglected the sparrow. It is the liberal's job to help us turn our eyes back toward him.

Miss MacIntosh, My God!

I HAVE NO PRESENT plans to read *Miss MacIntosh, My Darling*. Just the publicity photos of the authoress collapsing over the manuscript of her 1,198 page novel was enough to discourage me. *The New York Times Book Review* wants us to read this book, which according to their reviewer, a Mr. William Goyen, is a "masterwork." Goyen describes *Miss MacIntosh* as "sweeping, swelling and inexhaustibly breeding fiction, which pulls behind it, on and on, page after page, loads and burdens of images proliferating images; precise cataloguings; inventories and enumerations of facts, plants, hats, heraldries, geographies, birds, rivers, cities ancient and modern, kings and dynasties and archeologies." With the exception of the part about fiction I might have suspected that Mr. Goyen was talking about the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

But the *New York Times* tends to take an indulgent attitude towards books that it reviews, and it was in the *New York Herald Tribune Book Week* that I found some more useful information. Dick Shaap interviewed Miss Marguerite Young, who wrote the novel, and discovered that it was supposed to have been completed for Scribner's in 1949. Whatever her literary merits Miss Young rates considerable praise from all journalists, who are seldom able to stretch a deadline one hour, let alone sixteen years.

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In the interview, Miss Young also gave a pretty good hint of why her book is 1,198 pages long: "I work on each sentence until it is perfect and then I never rewrite it. I'm Scotch and I never throw away an image."

And so for nearly two decades the images were piled onto the pages, until, for $10.95, they burst upon the scene in completed form, the newest grand spectacle of the western world, neatly dovetailing with the end of the New York World's Fair.

Miss Young's apparent conviction that as long as the component parts are perfect the machine will work is a dubious one. It doesn't help the running of a watch to oil it with the finest French wine or to squeeze a pearl into its mechanism. Perhaps such a procedure works in What Cheer, Iowa, but from some of the reviews I have seen it appears questionable.

A reader or two will probably suggest that I shouldn't go around writing about books until I've read them. But *Miss MacIntosh* presents an unusual and interesting problem. It is both too long and too expensive to read unless one enjoys it.

Alone, this is a problem of insignificant proportion. But what if the idea catches on and the length and price of books balloons until we are unable to buy a novel for under ten dollars except at the paperback stand in a drugstore? Would we not become a nation of literary gamblers with the publishing house (like the house at all casinos) taking most of the haul?

We can not count upon the publisher to tell us candidly whether a thousand-page book he has published is worth the time, money and eyestrain. Reviewers are an increasingly unreliable group, drifting ambiguously from criticism to salesmanship. So about the only things one can do are to plunge in oneself, suggest the book to a friend who can be expected to give a decent judgement, or just forget it.

My own plan as far as *Miss MacIntosh* is concerned is to follow the last-named course for the time being. Not that I won't ever read it. But after all, Miss Young took 17 years to write the book and I think I'll make up my mind about reading it with similar deliberation.

Skirmish on Poverty

1. Through Povertyland on $50 a day

THE ANTI-POVERTY program reminds one of the observance of Christianity in some quarters: a good deal more preaching than practicing. The righteous men with their righteous words stream out of Washington to wash the countryside clean of privation.

It is an impressive performance, not unlike a spirited revival meeting. But one can not help but wonder at times what happens when the sermon's echo dies away and who ultimately benefits more from the proceeds of the collection plate: the congregation or the preacher.

The anti-poverty missionaries are an expensive bunch. A report issued by the General Accounting Office this summer listed 14 fulltime consultants working for the Office of Economic Opportunity at $50 a day or more in the field of public affairs alone. One of these gentlemen, a former public relations director for the Martin Marietta Corporation, was listed as receiving $100 a day for his services. The salaries of fulltime consultants, of course, are only a portion of the public relations costs of OEO. It is also necessary to have part-time consultants and regular staff members, as well as materials for them to produce, such as pamphlets, press releases, radio spots and rock 'n' roll television shows (not to mention those heart-rending photographs of hungry children etc. that one photographer has dubbed Pov Art).

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OEO is very much concerned with its public image and it believes in the currently fashionable public relations theorem: for every criticism there is an equal and opposite press release. This theorem has effectively superceded the older and now obsolete concept that one's public image is in some way related to the worth of what one produces.

In ancient days it was held that a good method of reducing criticism was to correct the conditions that brought about the criticism.

But OEO has benefited from that major breakthrough in flackology: the discovery that effective public relations can free an organization of any culpability for its actions or lack of action.

An organization thus liberated can operate solely according to its own inner logic. The public relations man simply takes this inner logic and, through verbal metamorphosis, turns it into a form recognizable to the outside world. This technique, among its other attributes, has an economic justification. Even at $50 a man-day, it is cheaper to support a large PR staff to tell the country what you are doing, than it is to actually do it. A program in print is considerably less expensive than a program in being.

A useful tool of the public relations man is the statistic. The anti-poverty program is full of statistics. One of the most interesting ones is the number of poor people who have been "directly helped" by the "war" on poverty. Sargent Shriver recently estimated the figure at 1,750,000. This appears to be an updating of the statistics compiled by OEO for the end of fiscal year 1965, and presented in the impressive table shown on this page. An observant reader will notice the two footnotes at the bottom of the table. Footnote 1 reads: "Indirect includes other family members and such things as temporary use of rest-stop facilities in the care of migratory workers." Footnote 2 reads: "Not adjusted for poor people served by more than one program."

The extent of indirection in "indirect" assistance and the admitted duplication in computing the number served by the program are highly relevent when considering the total number of persons "directly" and "in-

OEO's Statistics

	Poor Served by June 30, 1965		
	Direct	Indirect[1]	*Total*
Community Action Program:			
Action grants	600,000	330,000	930,000
Migratory agricultural workers	73,000	425,000	498,000
Job Corps	10,000	30,000	40,000
Neighborhood Youth Corps	265,000	850,000	1,115,000
Work experience program	88,000	264,000	352,000
Work study program	85,000		85,000
Rural loan program	11,000	44,000	55,000
Adult basic education	35,000		35,000
Total Served	1,167,000	1,943,000	3,110,000[2]

1 Indirect includes other family members and such things as temporary use of rest-stop facilities in the care of migratory workers.

2 Not adjusted for poor people served by more than 1 program.

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directly" helped by the poverty program. It would be well to keep these two little footnotes in mind. You can be sure that OEO won't remind you of them each time they tell you how many people they are helping.

Let us, however, be charitable for a moment and accept Mr. Shriver's figures of 1,750,000 persons assisted. This means that approximately five per cent of those living in poverty have been helped by the program in some way during the first year. That's not five percent brought out of penury, mind you, but five percent who have felt the slightest impress of Mr. Shriver's efforts. The number who are substantially better off because of the program can only be guessed at, but even under ideal conditions, it would represent but a fraction of this total.

2. Politicians, Professors & Profits

It can be seen that the poverty program so far, despite the Administration's immodest claims, is a rather modest effort. This is the fundamental criticism that must be made of the operation. It just isn't enough, and no amount of public relations mishmash can obscure this fact.

The money OEO does have at its disposal has been put to good and imaginative use in many instances. But in other instances—and they are too frequent—disturbing difficulties have developed.

One of the biggest problems is that the big city Democratic machines have seized upon the poverty program as a new addition to their feifdoms. In Philadelphia, where the local program was months in getting underway, the heavy smell of politics floats through the operation. One Philadelphia newsman reported that no candidates for the local political action committee (the election of whose members had been publicized as an example of the anti-poverty democracy in action) were selected "who did not have political sponsorship and who had not been cleared by the mayor's patronage chief."

While the poor are meant to be participating in the decisions of the community action programs, this has not materialized in many communities. For one thing, "Negro" is considered by some as a synonym for "poor" and so politically powerful Negroes who have associate memberships in the white establishment have been selected to represent the impoverished. This does not accomplish the intent of the program.

The wonderboys of academia have also found in the poverty program a fine new toy. One of their kind wrote a slashing report on the extent of poverty in Ypsilanti, Mich., that so impressed OEO that it was not long before President Johnson announced a $188,252 grant to the stricken town.

The Ypsilanti Township supervisor read about the grant in the newspaper the next day. It was the first time he had received any indication that the federal government was going to pour money into his community. Upon reading the professor's report, supervisor Roy Smith found it full of errors and said so. The resulting furor brought an admission from the institute for whom the professor had prepared the report that "some errors of detail in describing the physical elements and population statistics of the area did occur." The institute added that "none of these errors were fundamental."

But it does appear to be a fundamental error for a government agency to grant large sums of money on the basis of carelessly drafted research reports without bothering to confirm the accuracy of the reports' conclusions.

The professors and the politicians are not the only ones who are enjoying the poverty program. A number of projects are in the hands of large corporations who are reimbursed for their contributions to the war on a cost-plus-fixed-fee basis.

One job corps camp set up and operated by a corporation has received high praise. It is cited as an example of what a job corps camp should be. Is it too cynical to suggest that this

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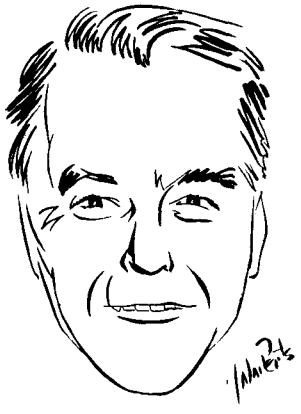

Shriver: Interesting Statistics

corporation has a large financial stake in insuring that its pilot project is a success?

The corporations receive 4.7% above expended costs. This is less than the average amount received by contractors on military orders (where fees run from 7 to 10 per cent). Still, a precedent has been set that may prove as difficult for OEO to change as it has been for the Defense Department. The Johnson Administration, theoretically, does not generally approve of cost-plus contracts. In a booklet called "War on Waste," issued by the Bureau of the Budget, there is the following paragraph:

"Experience indicated that increasing dependence on the cost-plus-fixed-fee type of contract had failed to gain the results desired in controlling programs after the contracts were placed. Major criticisms of this type of contract were lagging program schedules, performance failures, massive overruns in costs, and the general lack of incentives for contractors to turn in a better performance at lower cost. The reason for this was obvious: total reimbursement of all allowable costs and a negotiated fee were guaranteed. This is gradually being changed."

But not in the poverty program. There the competitive-bid contract is virtually unknown.

There are justifications for this, such as that offered by Rep. James Roosevelt, Democrat of California:

"It was very difficult to let contracts on a competitive basis when this started. You did not know the kind of a contract to bid on or to ask bids on. Therefore, a negotiated contract was the sensible way to proceed."

But Mr. Roosevelt added:

"But within a short period of time from now (we) should either provide for some return of undue profits, or we should serve notice that we will do everything we can to see wherever a competitive contract can be called for, that it will be called for under this act."

This is something that will have to be attended to in the near future, or the poverty program will join the military as a major donor of unjustified profits to large corporations.

3. A Preview of Choreography

The poverty program has produced some costly projects of dubious value. Secretary of Labor Wirtz, according to one news dispatch, has set up a program to hire "2,152 college graduates to study the culture of poverty." A $52,000 federal grant last summer gave 480 teenagers a "preview of occupations" including a visit to choreographic studios. OEO allotted $30,000 to Hopkins Park, Ill. (population 7,000), to count the number of people living there, survey road conditions, and ask people why they are poor. As the Negro editor of the local weekly newspaper pointed out:

"Any fool walking or riding around Hopkins Park can see why the people are poor. They are poor because there is no payroll here."

But such examples can be given exaggerated importance. Rep. Edith Green of Oregon has compared the problem to the costs of military research and development. As she points out, you can not experiment without failures. Over the past ten years, military programs eventually cancelled have cost us $6 billion, including the Dyna-Soar space plane, the XB-70,

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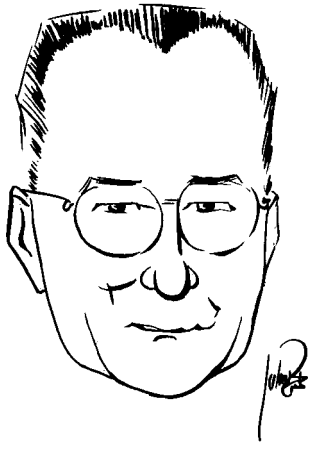
the Skybolt Missile, the Minuteman, the nuclear-powered aircraft, and the Snark intercontinental guided missile. Any imaginative program must be expected to have some false starts. The problem for OEO is to recognize them quickly and get rid of them before they unduly drain the program.

4. Fertility & Farmers

There are important gaps in the poverty program. One of the most serious is the lack of emphasis on birth control. As Senator Clark aptly expressed it:

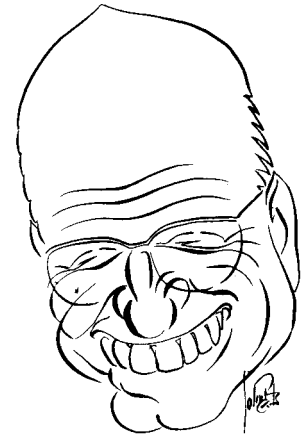
"Since the poor are reproducing themselves faster than the population as a whole any war on poverty which ignores the matter of fertility is reducing automatically the impact of its investment."



Wirtz: The Culture of Poverty

Under present regulations OEO precludes giving contraceptive devices and drugs, funded by its money, to unmarried women and women not living with their husbands. This is moral myopia. OEO funds also are not allowed to be used for advertising the availibility of family planning programs funded by OEO grants. In other words, it is all right to have birth control clinics but wrong to tell people about them. This is a curious way to win the war.

Another problem is that only a small percentage of poverty funds are available for eliminating rural poverty. And yet many of those in poverty live in rural areas.



Roosevelt: Getting Competitive Contracts

The American Indian who, one would think, has been ignored long enough, is not finding much hope in the poverty program, either. Senator George McGovern reports that in South Dakota "leaders of an Indian tribal group have virtually given up in despair after repeatedly being turned down when applying for approval of a community action program. They are overwhelmed by the red tape and bureaucratic complexities involved in completing an approved application."

The natural course of bureaucracy has created other difficulties for the poverty program. In North Carolina, a Head Start-type program was underway prior to passage of the anti-poverty bill. The state proposed to expand their project (costing approximately $30 per child) to include 1,000 units, benefiting 15,000 children and asked money for the job. This was rejected by OEO which insisted on Washington control of the program. This was despite the higher costs of the federal Head Start projects

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($170 per child) and despite the fact that OEO apparently had no quarrel with the results of the state program. It just didn't like the administrative structure.

5. Trouble & Hope

The poverty program has serious troubles. It is not extensive enough. The money it does have has not been put to the best use. The program's administration leaves much to be desired. In many communities "giant fiestas of political patronage," as one critic described it, have been taking place. Despite Sargent Shriver's solemn promise to Congress in March, 1964, that "every dollar will be used to help the poor; there will be no leakage," there has been an excessive amount of waste. Important matters such as birth control and rural poverty have been given short shrift. The danger exists that corporations will milk the program. And the agency responsible for the program — OEO — has been less than objective in dealing with the criticisms made of its efforts.

But having said this, it is also important to recognize the potential of the program. Representative Billy Farnum of Michigan summed it up well in a statement on the floor of the House during the recent poverty debate. He told his colleagues about a 17-year-old boy who in the depths of the Depression, dropped out of high school:

"He had nothing to do and no place to go and the cause of his poverty was simple: there was not enough available to feed the farm family of 10 of which he was the oldest.

"His government offered him an opportunity to help himself by letting him go to a Civilian Conservation Corps camp. In the CCC he found opportunity to extend his formal education. He learned to cook for his camp and keep books and to appreciate the value of orderliness. He learned also possibly the most important lesson of all, how to live with and get along with other people.

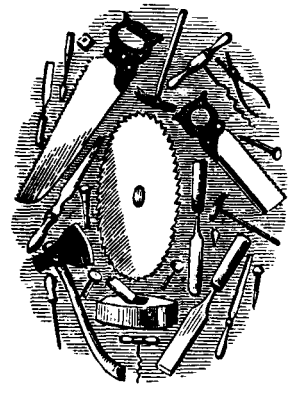
"That youngster was able to put CCC-learned skills to work to the end that he became immediately a producing member of the community. He was not only able to work effectively at gainful employment but he found himself temperamentally inclined to serve with and work with people.

"There were still rough times ahead, but he never again knew black dispair.

"Because of the CCC, the Job Corps of its day, that boy gained the initiative to try to make something of himself. He increasingly widened his field of employment, his field of help for others. In time that boy was honored with election to the office of auditor general for his native state. And then he was selected to serve in Congress, where today he asks you to give to others the advantage that the Congress of the 1930's granted him.

"I am that boy."

Here was a dramatic expression of the great hope that the poverty program holds. Despite machinations by politicians, despite the administrative labyrinth of OEO, despite superfluous studies and stupid projects, the program is a national asset. The task for the Administration and Congress is to increase its worth by doing more and doing it better.



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CUTTING LINGUISTIC SMOG

By Mike McManus

It was a long time coming, but finally, someone has invented an anti-gobbledygook machine.

If early experiments are successful, anyone dealing with printed bureaucratese will breath many sighs of relief. As one harried reporter put it, "I saw this marvelous instrument with my own eyes down at the Interstate Commerce Commission. Otherwise I wouldn't have believed it. Ordinarily, I don't become emotionally involved where electronics are concerned, but in this case I don't mind admitting, I cried a little."

Some 192 writers of ICC "prose" which more often looks like linguistic smog — have been working with the machine.

It teaches how to write.

Say, for example, an ICC employee has been dangling his modifiers or putting four sentences into one — common problems in the civil service. With the use of a tape — which is transparent not red, incidently — the machine teaches how to undangle a modifier by amputating and transplanting it. He can become equipped to recognize split infinitives and a host of other language deformities.

The anti-gobbledygooker, technically known as an autotutor, was installed on a trial basis. It is essentially a teaching machine which poses problem sentences, phrases, etc., offers multiple choice answers — and gives the correct answer before moving on to the next problem. The bureaucrat learns at his own pace.

Now, after a four-month test, the ICC is evaluating continued use of the machine. Dyrck Van Duyl, training officer at the ICC, says he's "favorably impressed," and initial results indicate improvement in writing and punctuation.

If the machine proves successful, other government agencies are bound to snap it up in the interest of slashing through bureaucratic obscurities.

At least, let's hope so.

Who Can Name It?

By Archibald MacLeish

When Adlai Stevenson spoke at the memorial service for Eleanor Roosevelt, who had come home, he said, to the rose garden at Hyde Park for the last time, he told her friends that it was not her life they had lost —she had lived that out to the full. It was the thing she was — "and who can name it?"

In the ordinary context, the context to which our age is increasingly accustomed, a life like his becomes a puzzle, a contradiction which even those who love him cannot readily resolve. Our generation — and not in the United States alone — not only in the United States — is obsessed by a view of human life which leaves no room for any human greatness or magnificence but one. Power fascinates us, and the exercise of power, and we judge our public figures by the power they dispose of, by the offices they hold which give them access to the thrust of power.

Adlai Stevenson cannot be measured by these measures, cannot be known or recognized by them, or even named. He had no taste for power, no desire for it. The unforgettable speech in which he accepted the inevitability of his nomination for the Presidency was a portrait of himself as ill-advised politically as it was personally honorable. And the two disastrous and superb campaigns which he conducted

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were proof that his reluctance at the start was not the reluctance of political calculation but of passionate belief.

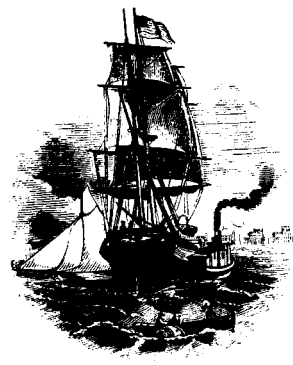
When he said, years afterward, that he would like to be remembered for those unsuccessful ventures, for those two defeats, he meant that there are some things in the life of a democracy more important than to come to power — more important, ultimately, than than the possession of the power.

And yet, it is in terms of power or of the failure to come to power, that his life is still most commonly conceived. In the shock and sorrow of his sudden death, the minds of those who wrote and spoke of him went back again and again, over and over, with admiration and regret and more sometimes than admiration or regret, to what were called the contradictions and the paradoxes of his history. He was, we were reminded, a great political figure who had never held a great political office; a master of the art of government who had governed only in his own state; a public man unsuccessful somehow in public life—too fine for it perhaps; a Hamlet who thought too long too deeply, who doubted too scrupulously, who could never permit himself to be as sure as an American politician in the fifties was supposed to be sure, that that voice beneath the battlements urging to violence and revenge was the king —his father's voice.

Well, it was true in part of course —true that he thought long and deeply—true that he had the courage of his doubts—true, too, that he was skeptical of hatred and its prophets in a day when the great majority of his fellow citizens were listening to those prophets and believing them. But the conclusions most often drawn from these observations are not true. Hamlet dies to those heartbreaking words in which the pity overwhelms the grief: "Good-night, sweet prince." In Adlai Stevenson's death there is no room for pity. Those of us who mourn him think of him not as a man defeated in his purpose but as a man victorious in it; not as a man whose life was a contradiction and a paradox, but as a man whose life had a particular singleness, an unusual wholeness, its own law.

His great achievement was not political triumph or, indeed, triumph of any kind. His great achievement was the enrichment of his time by the nature of his relationships with his time. If his intelligence was remarkable, it was remarkable, even more than for its clarity, by its modesty, its humor, its total lack of vanity or arrogance. If he was one of the great articulators of his time, one of the few, true voices, it was because the words he spoke were the words of his own thought, of his deepest and most personal conviction. It was himself he gave in word and thought and action, not to his friends alone but to his country, to his world. And the gift had consequences. It changed the tone and temper of political life in the United State for a generation. It humanized the quality of international exchanges throughout a great part of the world. It enlightened a dark time.

Which means, I suppose, that Adlai Stevenson's great achievement was himself. What we have lost, as he said of his friend Mrs. Roosevelt, is not his life. He lived that, if not to the full, at least more fully than almost any other man. What we have lost is himself. And who can name the warmth and richness of it?



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Medias (sic) Unlimited, Inc.

By Don Whisenhunt
& Erbin Crowell

ON A RECENT *Open End* program with panel members representing several major conservative organizations, David Susskind began reading a quote from a national news magazine. Before he could finish, one of his panelists interrupted to ask the source. "*Newsweek,*" he answered casually without looking up and resumed his quotation. As he did, all the guests leaned back as if in relief (they had been crouched forward in rapt attention), and the inquiring panelist sighed, "Oh, that left-wing radical magazine."

"What?" Susskind almost shouted in amazement, "*Newsweek?*"

"Sure," was the answer, and all comrades nodded their approval.

"*Newsweek?*" Susskind asked again, with mock-shock this time, "What about *Time?*"

"Oh that one too; maybe even worse . . ."

"*Time?*"

Susskind was out of his chair. Then, in the familiar habit of the program, everyone leaned forward and began to talk at once.

The conclusion that the institutions of the Establishment are controlled by "the other side" is a standard argument of both ends of our political spectrum. Liberals have no more love for *Time* magazine than do John Birchers. Bigness, mass anything strikes fear in the hearts of almost all of us, whether we happen to be pink, reactionary or merely moderate, unless, of course, we control the bigness.

The conspiracy theory of contemporary politics is particularly dear to the conservatives of the United States, and the more conservative the organization the more dastardly conspiratorial the opposition. And is there a more liberal, left-wing, powerful, demoralizing force in our land than the Columbia Broadcasting Company? A man named David Dye believes not, and he plans to do something about it. But Mr. Dye, who calls himself a conservative Republican and admits no ties to any more reactionary group, does not plan to march in and grab the microphone like a Latin American rebel. CBS has too many stations around the country for one thing. Besides, that's a tactic of revolutionaries. No, Mr. Dye is going about it in the old American way.

What Dye, through his organization, called Medias (sic) Unlimited, Inc., hopes to do is gain control of CBS and make it a force for good American patriotism in the vast wasteland of soft-headed, internationalist, programming. If you haven't heard yet, then you're one of those to whom Medias has not sent its eight-page brochure of intentions. Or perhaps you just haven't chanced down a barren street in Lubbock, Texas, where, from a small efficient-looking building in the midst of one of its sprawling shopping areas, calls of "Wake up America" are quietly mailed out.

We heard about it and decided to give Mr. Dye a call. "What magazine did you say that was? Is it liberal or conservative?"

"It's a new magazine, Mr. Dye," we answered, "and we sure would like to learn more about your organization." After finally convincing him that we were not in any way connected with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("They're watching me pretty close" he said), he agreed to talk to us, but only if we'd go by and pick up one of Medias' brochures. "Give you a lot of thought. Take you a couple or three hours to digest, unless you're one of those speed readers." We assured him that we read no faster than anyone else who had graduated from a good Texas school and set up a visit for that afternoon.

The brouchure was food for thought, and it did take us the better part of two hours to digest, it being difficult to digest without swallowing. Did you know, for instance, that CBS reporters formed the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and that those gen-

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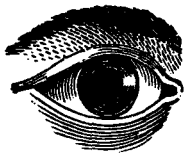

tlemen in question remained in one manner or another under salary to CBS even after the awful truth was known? Did you know that all major networks employed writers of questionable backgrounds, and that these writers used the mass outlets to corrupt the minds of millions with their liberal ideas? ("How long has it been since you saw a communist portrayed as a bad person on television?" Mr. Dye was to ask us later.) Did you know that the communist cause was being served by a CBS golf show which, by allowing the albeit mild insectives of golfers disappointed in bad shots to travel over the air-waves, had desecrated Sunday in America and seriously injured our moral fiber? Did you know how many shares of stock it would take to control CBS? (20,000 persons buying 200 shares each.) Did you know that violence on TV was a part of the conspiracy to divide and conquer America? Did you know that the fantasies of *The Twilight Zone* represented a conscious effort to demoralize America and make the left-wing idea of peace and coexistence more acceptable? All this and more we learned, so we kept our appointment with the President of Medias Unlimited, Inc. (The only other stockholders of the company are his mother and his wife.)

David Dye, graduate of Southern Methodist University and owner of three separate successful businesses in Lubbock, is a quiet congenial man. His office was spartan and efficient, and the only art work adorning the walls were photographs of Barry Goldwater, right-wing ex-Congressman Bruce Alger and Ronald Reagan.

We first asked Mr. Dye, why CBS? His brochure, congressional investigations—even THE IDLER (Jan. 1965) —have pointed out not only the extent to which sheer violence has pre-empted prime time but also the boring sameness of TV fare, regardless of the particular network.

"Well, to begin with, you are right about the common guilt," Mr. Dye answered, "but for one thing, NBC is controlled by RCA, and no one can buy stock. That left us with CBS and ABC. We decided to go for the big one."

We complimented him on his courage and audacity. "No," he humbly replied, "as I told the *New York Times*, one man if he's right has more power than Wall Street. I wouldn't tell them much more; they're one of the most left-wing papers around; almost as bad as the *Washington Post*. I refused to talk to the reporter from *Time*. Couldn't possible get a fair shake there." What about *Newsweek*, we asked slyly, thinking of David Susskind. "Well, what do you expect?" he said leaning back, "They're controlled by the *Washington Post*."

"So," he continued, "public opinion is molded by the mass media. Let's look at what they've done." In Mr. Dye's opinion, the Institute of Pacific Relations was one of the first of the various conspiracies that gave birth and power to others. They turned opinion against Chaing Kai-Shek when he was battling the communists in China. ("Did you know, by the way that Chaing is a Christian? Yes, and a good Christian; look at what they did to him.") The members of the institute attained great power within our State Department, mostly through their publication, *Amerasia*. "Now, about ninety of them were later arrested on various charges, but not before 39,000,000 were disarmed at the stroke of the pen of Marshall and Chaing was left to the mercy of the Commies."

And the conspiracy has continued and grown. Korea was next, and "did you know that some of our boys were not even given bullets—afraid they might hurt some of those commies?" That was the first time that America was forced to quit without victory. Then came Castro who had a marvelous TV image and was presented as the Washington of Cuba. Lastly there

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Editor's Note: We apologize for advertising this Christmas offer so early in the fall. Unfortunately, however, our next issue would arrive too late for many of our readers to take advantage of it.

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is Oswald. Dye cited the findings brought out in his brochure concerning the connection of CBS and the Fair Play for Cuba group, Oswald's membership in that group and the subsequent TV coverage which "was mainly concerned with turning public opinion against the hate-mongers of Dallas rather than the Communist conspiracy." Did he really believe that the assassination of Kennedy was part of a conspiracy? He had said that Kennedy himself was a tool of that conspiracy. "The over-all communist plan is to create a paralysis of division," he said, "They seldom assassinate the enemy. The honest liberal who is competing for the mind and ear of the working class and peasants—these liberals are the real dangers to the communist cause." We began to get confused.

What became more and more clear was that Mr. Dye considers any event which furthers the cause of conservatism as sort of a divine accident, and any action or circumstance which aids liberalism part of a complex conspiracy.

We asked what specifically he planned to do when he gained control of CBS. He spoke as if actual control were a bird in hand waiting for the next stockholders' meeting to sing its song. He was now mostly concerned with the selection of the new CBS board of directors. Medias is a proxy organization which plans to use its power to unseat the entire present board at Columbia. Dye owns 200 shares, but mostly he is relying on "concerned Americans across the country" who are even now buying CBS stock and pledging their proxy to Medias. He is also counting on many present stockholders to come to his aid when the time comes to take control. We asked him if he would name anyone being considered for the new board, and he looked at us as if we were insane to think that he would do such a thing.

"We—I say 'we' although I have no intention to take a board seat—would first change the approach to the news." He seemed particularly upset with the CBS correspondent in Viet Nam and laid to him no small part of the blame for America's difficulties there. Any reportage of alleged cruelty on the part of American Marines or loyal native soldiers had no place on the air-waves. What was needed here, he said, as in other news situations, was to give simple, honest, forthright reportage of events. It was clear that he meant playing up the enemy's cruelty and ignoring any of our own part in the universal cruelty called war. Yes, he finally admitted, he would find it necessary to get rid of a good number of CBS' news staff.

As for other CBS programs, he would release most of the present script writers; Rod Serling first. *Gunsmoke*, which he had attacked because of its demoralizing violence, he would merely modify since its format was "basically good Americanism." *The Defenders* could also be made a good show if the content of the scripts were closely watched. He continued, "We would use the talents of more of the fine entertainers who are conservatives. Conservatives have always fared badly in the liberal-controlled entertainment media. Look at Senator Murphy and Ronald Reagan; their careers as actors —and finer ones are hard to find— were almost wiped out by those who control Hollywood. John Wayne has experienced trouble lately. Did you know that many movie houses refused to run Wayne's *The Alamo?* He had a terrible fight getting that fine patriotic film shown."

He had a lot of work to do. It was time to go. Could we get on the mailing list and receive his regular newsletter? No.

The next stockholders' meeting of CBS is in April. Mr. Dye has been unable to get the stockholders list from CBS, but he has his lawyers working on it. He believes this is an indication that CBS is becoming more and more worried by his growing strength. Anyway, he says he has people in forty-eight states who are assuring more proxies. He seems confident. His secretary looks snowed under with correspondence.

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It All Sounds the Same

By Uncle Abner

SALTLICKHAM

ELIZABETH HAS A complaint to file with the Federal Communications whatchamacallit. She says that television and radio broadcasting stations around here turn the President up extra loud when he comes on the air. I believe her, too. Just the other day, when I was putting on some new shingles up behind the house where the wind tore them down a few weeks ago, Elizabeth had the radio on in the kitchen and about the only thing I could hear was the soap commercials and Mr. Johnson. And I'm not exactly sure which came on more often.

I can't figure out why the President thinks he's got to talk so much. Damned if it don't seem all pretty much the same to these ears.

I used to listen to Mr. Johnson some careful. I calculated that a man who's smart enough to be President ought to be able to educate me a little on these complicated problems we've got. But after awhile I found out I wasn't getting much wiser for the listening. Just like I was telling Oscar Glump (he's the County Agent) the other day. I said, "Oscar, I'm sure glad Lyndon Johnson doesn't have your job."

And Glump says, "Why?"

"Would you," I said, "would you want a county agent to come look over your farm and see the pond all dried up, the cattle infected, bugs ruining your corn, rot in the barn foundation and a silo that's falling down and then have him tell you, 'Oscar, your farm is the hope of future generations. We must strive earnestly together to make this farm a temple for free men, not just in this country but in the united brotherhood of all mankind,' and then have him shake your hand and walk off without so much as leaving a government pamphlet on cattle infections?"

Glump allowed as how he wouldn't like that much, but said he would leave a pamphlet on cattle infections if I wanted. I told him that was just a for instance. It's hard to talk politics with Oscar. He's just the opposite of the President. Doesn't use words unless they're going to do some good. You show him what your problem is and he'll stand there looking at it for so long you think he's gotten hypnotized and then, all of a sudden, he'll say something like, "That new jack Les Whisket bought up to Boston ought to do the job." And it does.

Not that Mr. Johnson's got to be as quiet as Oscar Glump. If he's got something to say, I know I — and I expect Elizabeth — want to hear it. Like when Jack Kennedy was alive. We used to invite easy a dozen friends over every time he was going to give a big TV speech. We'd watch it then we'd sit around talking and arguing until it fetched up close to midnight. Now Kennedy he was trying to convince you of something and he was using the best words and the best sense he had available to do the job. He didn't talk at you like some TV announcer trying to get you to buy his type of aspirin or beer or what have you. He knew something about words that Kennedy did.

We haven't had too many of the TV parties since Mr. Johnson took over. But I'll tell you one thing. Anytime he wants to settle down and talk plain and honest about his Great Society or anything else, anytime he's got something to tell us that isn't all messed up with high-flying phrases that hold about as much water as a lobster trap; anytime he wants to do that, Elizabeth and me will be right there watching and listening.

CREDITS

The character sketches were drawn by John Perts, Suffolk, Va.

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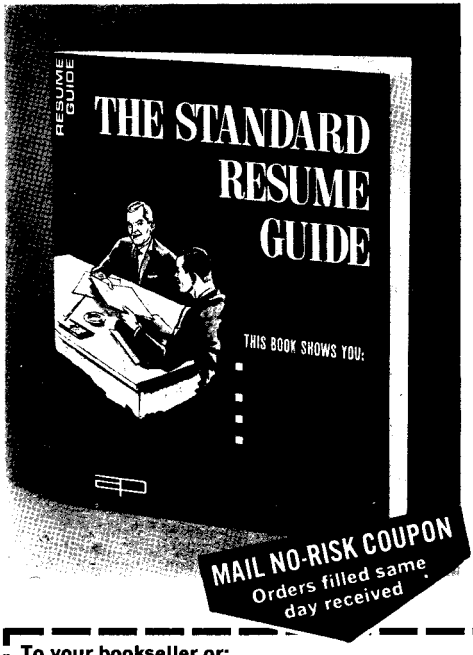

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HOLD ON!

By Charles McDowell, Jr.

WASHINGTON

HOWARD WORTH SMITH, who measures progress by the inch, met the metric system the other day. Both were stunned by the collision.

When the confusion cleared, Rep. Smith of Virginia, chairman of the House Rules Committee, had recovered sufficiently to light a fresh cigar and smile briefly at the outcome of the encounter. The metric system had not recovered, and would be confined in a cool, dark corner of the committee room for an indefinite period.

The man who introduced the venerable Judge Smith to the metric system was Rep. Miller of California, the genial, grandfatherly chairman of the Science and Astronautics Committee. His committee had approved a bill authorizing a $2.5 million, three-year study by the Department of Commerce to determine the practicability of adopting metric weights and measures in the United States.

Miller, a frank advocate of the metric way of life, wanted Judge Smith's committee to send the bill on to the House for action.

As Miller talked about the grand simplicity of meters, liters and kilograms, Smith watched his old friend with affection and great skepticism.

The Judge interrupted to say: "I got my early education in a one-room red schoolhouse in the country. We took our degrees in the three R's. Just to make an honest confession, I don't know what the metric system is . . . Would we have to go back to school? Couldn't we go in a store anymore and buy 10 yards of cheesecloth?"

Miller said you could go in the store and ask for about 9.2 meters of cheesecloth.

"Why, we'd have to change our education in this country!" said the Judge.

Yes, said Miller, and it was about time. Eighty nations, 90 per cent of the world's population, are on the metric system, or going to it, and the United States will soon stand alone with a system that is difficult to learn and use because it has "no rhyme or reason," Miller said.

For some reason — perhaps because he saw that Smith was being foxy and having a good time — Miller invoked the measurements of Gina Lollobrigida to show that the world would still be the same under the metric system.

"Her vital statistics are 36-28-34," he said, "and they would become 93-71-89, which is the same."

"You talking about her meters or her inches?" the Judge asked.

"Her centimeters," Miller said.

"Well, I'm still concerned about when she goes in to buy 10 yards of cheesecloth," the Judge said.

The other members of the Rules Committee joined in with similar concerns — road signs in kilometers, football fields in meters, all sorts of things.

Rep. Fulton of Tennessee, who had come along to support Miller, protested that nothing could be more bewildering than the present American system of weights and measures. To make his point dramatically, Fulton said, "Has anyone on this committee ever heard of a pole? Can any of you tell me how long a pole is?"

"Sixteen and two-thirds feet!" the Judge replied promptly, and the committee cheered him.

"Never underestimate the Judge," said Rep. Delaney of New York. The World Almanac says it's 16 and one-half feet — same as a rod or a perch — but the committee was not going to quibble, anyway. The metric system's advocates were now in some disarray, and the committee was delightedly united behind Judge Smith.

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Fulton tried to save the day by insisting that the metric system, with its easy decimals and progressions by tens and hundreds, was simplicity itself. He said it could be learned in a day, the fundamentals in an hour.

Rep. Madden of Indiana, a member of the committee, said nevertheless that he was for putting off the bill until the new session in January.

"Yes," Judge Smith said as gravely as possible, his eyes sparkling under his bushy brows, "Mr. Fulton says we could learn this meter system in an hour. If between now and January we could find an hour and Mr. Fulton could talk to us, then we'd know what we're talking about. I still don't know."

Fulton and Miller said with some resignation that the country was going to come to the metric system sooner or later.

The Judge listened, leaned over toward the member seated nearest him at the long table, removed the cigar from his mouth, grinned, and said in a rumbling aside, "I ain't gonna do it."

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Washington Notes

WASHINGTON

THIS SUMMER lasted too long. The weatherman says it was normal. I say it wasn't and down at the Stanton Grill most of the commentators on atmospheric conditions seem to agree.

The heat, which didn't break until the end of September, took its toll among the legislators and bureaucrats in residence along the Potomac. Especially hard hit was the United States House of Representatives. There, in the oppressive swelter, brains curdled, wills melted and wierd phantasmagoria appeared on the legislative horizon. In the space of a few short weeks that body had managed to do insult and injury to all the Negroes in Mississippi, every resident of the District of Columbia, and the entire sub-continent south of the Rio Grande.

Following its refusal to turn out the spuriously elected congressmen of Mississippi, the House moved on to larger fields. It resolved that the United States may "take steps to forestall or combat intervention, domination, control and colonization in whatever form, by the subversive forces known as international communism and its agencies in the Western Hemisphere." Our Latin American neighbors were understandably concerned over this apparent *carte blanche* for imperialism and eyed apprehensively the downstream bends of their rivers for any view of gunboats chugging up bound under the banner of democracy. It is hard, if you are not a citizen of the United States, (in fact, hard sometimes if you are) to comprehend the wondrous ways of the House of Representatives. But such outbursts should be taken in a calm and tolerant manner. One should understand that every so often the House gets to feeling down at the mouth because it can't ratify treaties like the Senate and because no one seems to care too much what it thinks about foreign policy anyway. On such occasions, the lesser legislative body finds that a rousingly petulant resolution does more for its soul than a heap of pep pills. While one is tempted to echo the words of Everett Dirksen upon hearing that House Republicans were sending a flying squad of experts to Europe last summer to investigate our crumbling NATO alliance — "Are you kidding?" he said — it should be remembered that this too will pass.

Still a Colony

It is more difficult for a resident of the District of Columbia to be as understanding of the House's aggravated assault upon the home rule bill. The Senate has voted for home rule for Washington time and time again. This year, the House was finally given the same chance as a discharge petition wrested the matter out of the rigor mortized fingers of the House District Committee. This — we were told — was due to the personal efforts of the President, who used his renowned magnetism to badger reluctant legislators into signing the petition.

Once the bill was on the House floor, however, that magnetism suddenly declined (or the polarity was reversed) and the home rule measure took a terrific beating. In their ultimately successful fight to prevent Washingtonians from getting too close to the instruments of democracy, the home rule opponents concocted a kaleidoscopic collection of amendments, substitute bills, recommital motions and other legislative poisons.

The Republicans insisted that the President retain final control over the Metropolitan Police Department (presumably so he could take speedy action in case the natives became too restless). Others wanted to give the District to Maryland, but that state firmly declined the offer. The man who came up with the idea, Virginia's bumptious Republican Representative Joel Broyhill, made no move to suggest

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that his own state take advantage of the opportunity that Maryland had missed. Instead, he offered another proposal that would let Washington run its own affairs with the exception of the police department, fire department, department of sanitation, department of highways, and I forget what else. My own favorite proposal — to permit Washingtonians to vote for Virginia's senators and to have an electoral voice in Mr. Broyhill's nearby district (thus to improve democratic institutions in both the District and Virginia) — never made it to the floor for serious discussion.

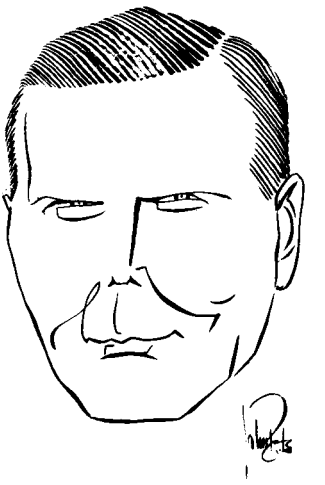
By the time the House was finished with the home rule bill it had been stripped cleaner than a chicken used for a cheap restaurant's *a la king* dinners. The House had made sure that Washington would remain for some time more the fully-colonized and totally undemocratically governed capital of the world's greatest democracy.

And That Wasn't All

This report does not intend to leave the impression that the representatives assembled did nothing constructive this fall. They did authorize commencement of a much needed annex to the Library of Congress. Some 25,000 volumes have piled up on floors of Library of Congress corridors and other available spaces because there is no room on the shelves.

Very well. We need it. But guess who's going to have a good deal to say in the construction of the James Madison Memeorial Annex? The very man who supervised the building of that fantastically expensive Thousand Year Reichstag — the Rayburn House Office Building — Capitol Architect George Stewart.

Is George Stewart the man to do the job? The Senate thought not and voted to turn the matter over to the General Services Administration which, if often uninspired in its contributions to federal architecture, is at least moderately efficient. Having often to walk by, through, around, and get lost in, Mr. Stewart's other



Broyhill: Missed Opportunity

edifices about Capitol Hill, I thought what the Senate thought a fine idea.

But the House Democratic leadership, for whom Mr. Stewart can do no wrong, didn't. They let it be known that the Capitol Architect was going to stay. They did, however, come up with a compromise that will get some consulting architects and consulting congressmen in on the deal. This may improve the structure or— more likely — just make it diffcult to figure out who's to blame.

I understand that there is a team of men appointed to make on-site inspections of the Antarctic treaties. President Johnson could appoint Mr. Stewart to this team (along with Robert Moses and O. Roy Chalk, perhaps) but it is unlikely. Rather, we will just have to face the prospect of another unedifying edifice on Capitol Hill in the Stewartesque tradition.

Right now the construction cost is estimated to be $75 million. That doesn't mean anything. The Rayburn Building wasn't meant to cost what it finally did. Now, with the new library annex project getting underway, James Madison (who in his first inaugural address promised "to observe economy in public expenditures") stands a better than even chance against Sam Rayburn to win the dis-

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tinction of giving his name to the most expensive building in the nation's capitol if not in the whole world.

But do not be alarmed, gentle reader. There is more money where that will come from. Did not the House of Representatives indicate the same this very fall by approving the first step in a $910 million project to dig a 360-mile channel in the Trinity River from the Gulf of Mexico to Ft. Worth, Texas? Alleluia! The Corps of Engineers be praised!

Helping Arkansas Grain Get By

Over on the other side of the Capitol, a number of Senators tried once again unsuccessfully to limit the bonanzas the government is giving to large farmers and corporations in the form of huge agricultural loans. There is, for example, the case of the Arkansas Grain Corporation, Stuttgart, Ark. Amount loaned by the government in 1964: $16.3 million. Amount paid back: $10.4 million. Net gain for Arkansas Grain: $5.9 million.

Also in 1964, seven barley producers received over $50,000 each. One ninth of the loans made to rice producers accounted for nearly two-thirds of the total of $38 million loaned. And so on, down through the list of commodities.

The proposed amendment to farm legislation would have limited the size of a loan or payment to any producer to $25,000 for one year. Further, the amendment would have barred payments to corporate business ventures. The amendment was defeated — by a margin of 56 to 33. A second amendment, raising the limit to $50,000, was also defeated.

Good-Bye to "Motel Just Over Hill"

Despite all the good that evolves from its interest in such matters, the Administration's handling of the arts and beauty has a certain clumsy character to it. Azaleas are planted by the thousands and then proceed to wilt. Writers and artists are marched through the White House (when they're willing to come) like fashion models introducing the new fall line. And now the Secretary of Commerce is about to assume great discretionary powers over the esthetics of our roads.

These powers will extend not only to federal superhighways, as in the past, but to 225,000 miles of primary roads throughout the nation. The debate in Congress on this measure found proponents of the highway scenic beautification bill conjuring up images of billboards 4 stories high and

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of others so large they obscure all view of Mt. Rainier. But the debate also brought out that Mr. Conner and his successors were going to have an awful lot to say about whether a farmer is going to be allowed to advertise "Watermelons Ahead, Two Miles" and whether signs such as "Motel Just Over Hill" will be permitted. Regardless of what the art critics may say, roadside advertising is not a total evil. I would miss the Mail Pouch advertisements painted on the sides of barns, the Dekalb signs, the stout claim that Joe's Texaco Station is the best place to buy gas in town, if they were to fall victim to the esthetic guidelines of the federal government. This is America, part of the excitement and pleasure of driving down a two lane road to anywhere. A connoisseur of local advertising can discern much from the posters. The economics, the history, the values, the ethnic composition of the community are all there between the lines of promotion. And we should not forget the necessity of advertising for the man whose motel *is* just over the hill and who, unless he tells you this fact, is unlikely to stand a fair chance for your business as you speed by at 50 m.p.h.

The past indicates that Washington is not an ideal arbiter of highway beauty. Will the men responsible for the signs announcing that this highway was partially built by federal funds amounting to the sum of umpteen million and so many odd cents have a say as to which signs on primary roads get torn down? Or the official who decided it was enough to post a notice listing "Food, Lodging, Gas" but not tell you that the food was lousy, the lodging too expensive and the gas ten miles away? Or the man who thinks it's wrong to tell you where the next Howard Johnson's is but feels it's necessary to remind you every two miles that "Speeders Lose Licenses" in left-slanting Italic caps?

There are choices every mile of the way, choices that require a nicety of judgment, not just sweeping regulations. Congress could have done a better job of it. It could have spelled out the matter more, but it was, as I said, hot and everyone was a little tired.

That Ferret Bird

Mundt: What's a Ferret?

Last Labor Day weekend, over two dozen press releases poured out of the White House. One of these concerned the establishment of a project to preserve rare species of wildlife. This has been a pet program of Senator Karl Mundt (R-S.D.), who apparently was a little miffed when President Johnson didn't invite him down to Texas to help announce the project. The reason I think this is because of a note the intrepid columnist — Mr. McDowell—discovered at the bottom of Senator Mundt's press release praising Mr. Johnson for his interest in endangered wildlife. The note read:

"Correction — In a report from Johnson City, Tex., the black-footed ferret, found only in South Dakota, was referred to as a bird. It is a mamal, a large weasel with black feet and face mask and inhabits prairie dog towns."

I dug up the White House announcement and must confess that Senator Mundt's implied criticism of

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HUGH HAYNIE ...

"You're A Very Sick Man—Get Well, Or I Will Kill You!"

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the White House may be a little unfair. (His claim that the black-footed ferret can only be found in South Dakota may also be a little inaccurate. At least one respectable reference work says it can be found in Nebraska and Kansas.) The way the announcement was worded it certainly looks as if the President thought the black-footed ferret was a bird (it was lumped without discrimination with whooping cranes, Aleutian Canada geese, snail hawks, tule white front geese, condors, ivory-billed woodpeckers, Florida everglades kites, and eastern brown pelicans). But he never actually came right out and claimed that it was.

Perhaps the reporter who wrote the dispatch referred to by Senator Mundt simply assumed the ferret was a bird by the company it was going to keep at the new Patauxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Md. I guess we'll just have to wait until the Arthur Schlesinger of the Johnson Administration ferrets out the truth in some future issue of *Life*.

Cesare & Francesca

By Lorelei

FEDERALSBURG, MD.

OUR SHIP, the *S.S. Laura* of the Austro-Italian Line, was anchored one mile out of Palermo and sending warning blasts every 10 minutes for us—the nine adventurers who had risked the ride to shore in small rowboats to explore the city. The captain had warned us that he would lift anchor at precisely 4 p.m., would warn us at 10 minute intervals from three o'clock on and that anybody not on board by four would jolly well be left behind.

At 3:10 we were all standing in front of a squat brick building near the quay, directly at the foot of a hill crowned by a monastery, a royal palace and a church. We had seen everything. From the instant we had touched land at nine that morning, we had had a guide, a character with a harelip and a twinkling eye, whose victoria drawn by a single scrawny horse had taken us everywhere. I had not wanted to come, having seen all of Palermo I wanted to see only a year before. But I was the only one speaking Italian, and I was drafted. The others in our party were two Greek medical students, two Hungarian ladies, three Russians (a poet, a sculptor, a violinist), and the ship's doctor. They all spoke some French or German and their native tongue but no Italian. It had been an exhausting business, this translating and interpreting, and I was all for getting in those horrible little rowboats and back to the ship and some nice hot coffee. But no. Our guide insisted that we see the really most exciting thing in all Sicily, in there, in that building, a catacomb.

We entered and almost at once, one of the Hungarians fainted dead away and her companion helped her back towards the entrance.

Our split-lip guide went ahead, blithely dragging us from one room into the next, a veritable labyrinth of small rooms, a honeycomb with every cell occupied by hordes of humans, all dead. Dead a long time. On tables and trestles in neat order were ancient coffins closed and dusty; but along the walls on other tables, under those tables and hanging from every inch of space on the walls were other dead. On the walls they hung by the scruff of their necks on hooks. On the tables and benches they were just piled like cordwood. Every single one of them wore a black shroud with a cowl much like a monk's habit, and in each case that cowl had fallen over the forehead so only the grinning lower part of each face was visible. They hung like old clothes and with the passing of time, their heads had assumed a sort of monkey-like attitude.

The others in the party started to protest, but the doctor wanted to know: there must be a history or a reason or something. There was.

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The guide cheerfully related how in 1908 when the earthquake almost destroyed Messina, great waves had come to Palermo, and undersea rumblings had heaved many of the cemetery's occupants right out of their graves and strewn them all along the Sicilian coast. They couldn't be left there, they couldn't be identified, so room was made for them in the catacomb.

The Greeks were not enjoying the guide's humor, and we were all for leaving at once, but once again Harelip insisted on showing us something.

I can remember most vividly a little coffin with one side made of glass. In it was a lovely child, dressed in white silk and lace, and beside the coffin was a dish of food, a toy rabbit and a rattle. The guide told us that descendants of the family came once a month to put in a fresh dish of milk and bread. The child looked asleep, but its little face now had a yellow tinge. That scene, however, was not the main attraction of this macabre place.

Following the guide we finally emerged in a room that looked at first glance like a luxurious bedroom with red window drapes fringed in gold, small puff seats covered in red velvet and what at first looked like a large bed, canopied also in red and gold, but oddly low. As it turned out, it wasn't a bed but a double catafalque, like a huge glass case, inside of which two people slept their eternal sleep. All around the bed a thick velvet rope was stretched to keep people from coming too close.

Awed by the sight, we stood around quite speechless; even the Greeks had nothing to say. For there, asleep side by side, were two youngsters in full wedding regalia.

She wore a magnificent dress of white and silver brocade, the low cut bodice completely covered with tiny pearls. Her arms, in long sleeves, were folded below her bust, and her hands held a white prayer book. The petals of many dead flowers had cascaded from her hands to her dress and into the folds of her priceless lace veil. The veil itself reached to her feet and was beautifully draped with her train

OPPORTUNITIES

Mediaeval brass rubbings. Fine art print of the monumental brass of Henry Sever (died 1471) Chaplain to Henry VII, Chancellor of Oxford University, from Merton College, Oxford. 60" x 21" gold on blue or scarlet. $15. Write RUBBINGS, c/o IDLER.

On the side of the Shenandoah Mountains, An attractive three-bedroom, 1½-bath, 2-fireplace lodge with very nice pond for swimming and fishing. Separate screen pavillion for barbecuing and other forms of conviviality. Borders the Shenandoah National Park. A 1½ hour drive from downtown Washington. Up to three acres. Cool in summer but warm enough to permit swimming 10 a.m.-6 p.m. $4000 down payment required. Price negotiable on acreage and financing. Write or Call HOUSE c/o IDLER.

Won't you try on ad in The Idler? You'll find details on Page 24.

DEALERS IN

NUTRITIOUS MEATS

Fill your freezer with organically raised Angus beef from registered herd, Maine, twelfth year. Shipped frozen in oven-ready, family size packages. From cattle raised in natural environment free of pesticides, chemical fertilizers and toxic substances. Minimum shipment: one cubic-foot carton. Write BEEF, c/o Idler.

New Republic, new, renewal, 25 issues, $3.00. Newsweek, 44 issues, $4.80, Progressive, 10 issues, $2.50. Pollack's Publishers Service, Little Silver, New Jersey.

Iron spiral staircase. 17 steps. About 12' high. Rescued from condemned hospital that took care of Civil War patients. Weight unknown but heavy. Washington area. $250. Write STAIR c/o Idler.

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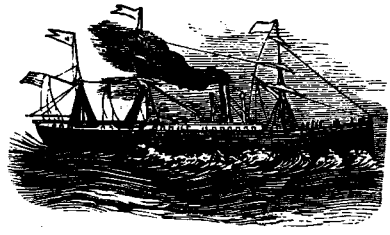
around her satin-shod feet. Her face was that of a girl not more than 17 or 18, framed in dark hair falling to her shoulders. There was a pearl coronet that held the folds of her veil, but it had slipped a little over her forehead and gave her an almost tipsy appearance. And as I stood at the foot of the bier and looked at her, I noticed that her eyes were not entirely closed and seemed to follow me almost mockingly. Her hands were gloved, but on the wedding finger, there was a wedding ring and a huge diamond ring. Around her throat circled a strand of pearls from which hung a cross made also of pearls.

Next to her slept her husband, a little older, maybe 20, dressed in a military uniform, red trousers and a white tunic with looped gold braid and a single medal. His hat lay beside his head, an ancient shako with a white plume and much gold braid. His arms were also crossed upon his chest, and between his gloved hands he held the hilt of his sword. Both of them lay on a bed of artfully draped red velvet.

Although the catacomb was below ground, its rooms had windows high up, level with the sidewalks outside and through which the sun now came slanting. And we heard again, faintly, the ship's siren. It was time to go. I saw in a last glance the little plaque of ebony fastened to each bier, each with a name. Cesare and Francesca.

The others were already following the guide towards the entrance, anxious to get out, but the two Greeks pulled me back. They wanted a last look at the star-crossed lovers, the latter day Romeo and Juliet. While we had been staring, nobody had spoken, not even the guide. But we would have explanations later on the way to the boat, I thought. The Greeks were anxious to find some explanations right now and dragged me back with them to explore a little more. There was nothing and we had to leave, but it was then we discovered we couldn't find the others. We could not even hear their voices. We could hear nothing but the steady call from the ship's siren. It was twenty minutes to four. Near panic seized us; we seemed to go around in circles, always emerging in a room where we had been before, or so we thought. We were alone with thousands of dead people hanging from the walls grinning at us.

Then suddenly the guide was there, pulling us bodily out towards the entrance. They had missed us and sent him back to look for us.



Outside, a man was selling postcards and little leaflets, but we three didn't have time to bother and no desire to linger and we rushed to the little pier where our boatman was awaiting us. He had charged us one lira each to bring us over. Now, with time running out and the ship about to pull up and leave us, the bandit demanded 10 liras from each of us. We had no choice.

Soon we were scrambling aboard under the scowling of the captain. The first thing he said was that we were to go to his quarters at five o'clock. We knew we were in for a lecture.

The two medical students and I had to bear the brunt of the captain's ire. In his quarters he gave us a blistering lecture, berating us for delaying the ship's departure by a full 25 minutes and because of us, there would be no stepping ashore at the next port of call or any other until we reached New York. Not even he could know that in Spain we couldn't get ashore anyway, because there was a bubonic plague epidemic and all of us would have had to be vaccinated. And after that, we would be tossed about like an empty nutshell on a storm-racked Atlantic for a full 12 days.

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During the entire trip, the glowering captain made us feel that we were responsible for the entire voyage's troubles. But I was so seasick that even he mellowed a little, ordered some foul-tasting drink for me and ended by telling the entire wild Sicilian tale of the ill-fated lovers.

The two had died at the altar a few seconds after being joined in matrimony. Some jealous suitor had managed to poison the communion wine, and the officiating priest had died with them, the captain said.

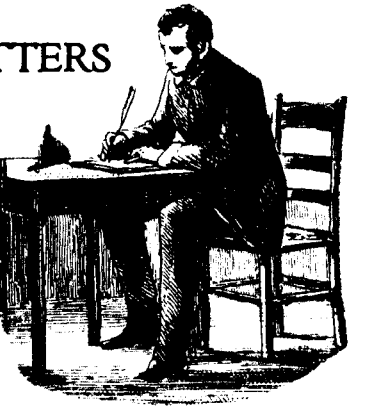
It has been more than 50 years since I listened with rapt attention to the captain's words. In later years, I have heard many reports from Sicily and Palermo in newspapers and books of travel, magazines and electronic communications but never a single word about the lovely Francesca and her Cesare. Maybe they have also been bombed right out of their red velvet bridal couch. And if anyone wonders about the jewels, well, the Sicilans—even the bandits—are too superstitious to rob a catacomb. Or maybe that is why no one has ever mentioned this since. Maybe everything has vanished, the lovers and the jewels.

Dusk Dream

In my dusk dream
I saw against a gray Maine day
You
And the sun set in my throat
Pressed salt spray on my lashes
For I heard your soul's voice
Answer the prayer on the bottom
of my heart.

—Harriet

LETTERS



ECHO OF THE GOOD GUYS

On the Coleman thing, (September issue) I think you got taken in by all the talk. Remember, if the civil rights groups had really wanted to block Coleman, they would have put up a far tougher fight, and people like Teddy Kennedy would never have voted in committee to approve the nomination. Hart and Javits were the only ones in opposition, both with significent and vociferous Negro constituencies. The civil rights groups evidently recognized that the Coleman appointment was the only even remotely acceptable one, and moreover, probably will turn out well. I hate to see the magazine turn into an echo of every tactical line set down by the good guys. That seems "knee-jerk liberalism" at its worst, for it means that you give up your own independence of position in defense of a claim which even those advancing it put forth only perfunctorily, for reasons of face and short-term tactics.

M. Aref
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Whatever the rationalization for it, the Coleman appointment was a poor one, and that is what I suggested. The fact that you don't know how to swim may be an excellent explanation for one's drowning, but it doesn't make you any less drowned.—Ed.

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Flotsam & Jetsam

THE VERBAL SLIP of the month (from a White House announcement): "This report summarizes the major efforts of the Federal Government to lead the way in keeping America beautiful. It is an encouraging report because it indicates that concrete progress is being made."

PETER PAIN, villain of the old Ben Gay comic strip ads, has finally been vanquished. But it wasn't the ointment that killed him. It was the advertising department of Lemming/Pacquin, the company that makes Ben-Gay. Peter Pain, you will recall, was the nasty little guy who kept kicking people, throwing things and jabbing them with a pitchfork. In the end, he was always foiled by the arrival of Ben-Gay ointment on the scene. But Lemming/Pacquin decided he wasn't a "fun guy" and so have liquidated him for good. Drat, Ben-Gay!

WHO IS SO BOLD as to say that the *New York Times* is a bad newspaper? George Lichtheim, writing in *Commentary*, that's who. An English author, professor and ex-journalist, Lichtheim calls the *Time's* foreign coverage "a compound of ignorance, provincialism, and plain incompetence," and backs up his case with a fairly extensive series of specific examples. "The editors in New York," says Lichtheim "are not interested in anything save spot news, and the correspondents in the field for the most part are unable to produce anything else." And he further argues that the paper's executives have an inflated impression of the *Time's* reputation within the journalistic and academic fields.

A REPORT FROM California tells us of a new telephone sales device that calls you up with a recorded message. If you hang up on the thing it calls you back. If you're out it calls you back. A state legislative committee is looking into the matter but in the meantime residents are being advised to let the message finish. There is, at present, no other way of getting rid of the recorded pitch.

BAYARD RUSTIN, the civil rights leader, was invited to speak before some 55 Maryland local and state police officers at the University of Maryland last month. The University sent him an anti-subversive oath, which he returned unsigned, and Governor Tawes ordered a police investigation into Rustin's background. The university later relented and Governor Tawes reported that the investigation had turned up "no indication that he should not be invited" to speak. We wonder about the status of freedom of speech in a state that won't even let its own police use their judgement in selecting speakers.

STEVE GREYSER, of the *Harvard Business Review*, has sent us a copy of a survey on attitudes towards women executives, which he helped to conduct. Over half of the male executives interviewed said they were either favorable or indifferent toward women in managment, and very few had militant feelings one way or the other. Still, there was an overwhelming feeling that only the exceptional woman can hope to succeed in management. The report also noted that while the absolute number of women executives has increased dramatically since 1950, the proportion of female to male executives has not increased appreciably.

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AN IMPORTANT BILL designed to protect people against installment plan gouging has been drafted for the District of Columbia. Its provisions are worth consideration by the Congress for possible incorporation into a national act of the same kind.

Under the proposed measure the seller would have to provide a clearly worded standard contract in large print and to list costs of the item, credit service charges, fees for repossession and all other charges. The seller could not gain a claim over a whole series of articles by taking paid-up items as security for unpaid ones, then repossessing everything if the buyer defaults at any point along the line (indications are that this practice is not uncommon). All payments would have to be uniform and sellers could not use the "balloon technique" (requiring a large payment at the end) as a device to force the buyer to default. Buyers hit by door-to-door salesmen would be permitted to cancel a contract within one day if they changed their minds.

THAT THE OLD ways of the East are rapidly changing thanks to the export of progressive Western culture is indicated by the following item from the *Borneo Bulletin:*

"Miri: Go-kart meetings are to be banned in the centre of Miri. In the past, the town has been the sport's chief centre in Borneo with at least two big meetings a year.

"Members of the Miri District Council complained at their last meeting that the races held in the town centre during the recent Miri Regatta held up traffic for more than two hours.

"Tony Carroll, a Sarawak Shell employee, had a leg amputated after crashing. This has made people realize go-karting can be dangerous. Some would like to see it banned completely."

Jeers or Cheers . . .

. . . as appropriate, to the following:

☞ THE ATTORNEY GENERAL of Alabama, who of late has been displaying more guts in civil rights matters than the Attorney General of the United States.

☞ TEXAS TECH COACH J. T. King, who has added immeasurably to the sport of football by introducing closed-circuit instant video tape replay for the benefit of his squad. We would not be surprised if Mr. King soon comes up with a means of doing away with football players entirely.

☞ MAJOR GENERAL Jonathon O. Seaman, Commanding Officer of the First Infantry Division, for encouragement of a free press by presenting "certificates of achievement" to two Kansas daily newspapers. The papers won their laurels for "acting independently and in keeping with the highest standards of professional journalism" when they "refrained from speculation in reporting the activities of elements of the First Infantry Division which was preparing for movement to a then classified destination." The citation praised the papers for refraining from "writing news stories that would not be in the interest of national defense."

☞ THE REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL Committee, for putting out news releases on Democratic congressmen who voted to withhold funds from the House Un-American Activities Committee in which it was stated that "Congressman's vote has lined him up with every subversive organization in the country."

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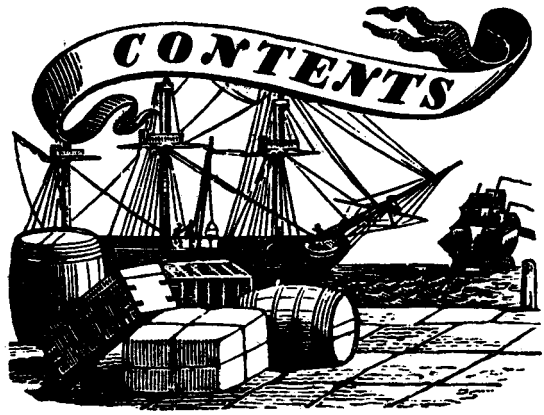

WHERE ARE THE GUTBUCKET LIBERALS? ..... Page 1
THE SKIRMISH ON POVERTY ..... Page 7
CUTTING LINGUISTIC SMOG ..... Page 13
WHO CAN NAME IT? ..... Page 13
MEDIAS (SIC) UNLIMITED, INC. ..... Page 15
UNCLE ABNER ON LBJ ..... Page 20
CHARLES MCDOWELL ON THE MEASURE OF PROGRESS ..... Page 22
WASHINGTON NOTES ..... Page 25
LORELEI ON CESARE & FRANCESCA ..... Page 30
FLOTSAM & JETSAM ..... Page 34

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